DISCOVER COLOMBIA'S AMAZONIAN COCOA

HIGH QUALITY, UNIQUENESS AND PEACE!
THE PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION OF CAQUETÁ, WHERE THE ANDEAN FOOTHILLS MEET THE AMAZONIAN FOREST, MAKE IT IDEAL FOR THE PRODUCTION OF PREMIUM COCOA VARIETIES, MANY OF THEM A PART OF THIS AREA’S BIOLOGICAL HERITAGE.

SOUTH AMERICA
COLOMBIA

TERRITÓRIOS CAQUETEÑOS SOSTENIBLES – PARA LA PAZ (TCSP), is a development cooperation project, initiated in 2018 and funded by the EU Trust Fund for Colombia and Camões I.P. - and implemented by Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (IMVF) and Red Adelco, which focuses on the post conflict recovery of Colombia’s Caquetá region. Supporting the local economy through an investment in agroforestry production, namely cocoa, is a key component of this process.

In the last two years the project has unveiled Caquetá’s potential for cocoa production, making exciting discoveries and progresses that raise the prospect of a promising future for this sector in the region.
In the depths of Colombia’s Amazonian region, which, until recently, was at the forefront of a violent armed conflict, it is possible to find a unique diversity of cocoa genotypes. The recently attained peace in this vast and largely unexplored region, has allowed for the discovery of a wide scope of varietal characteristics in cocoa trees, with ancient, introduced and spontaneous genotypes.

The strong sensory characteristics of the cocoa types found in Caquetá, at the crossroads between Peruvian, Ecuadorian and Colombian Amazonia, have encouraged cocoa production, with the support of the TCSP project. The aromatic richness and complex scent of these cocoa types are exclusive to the area. Their strong and unique cocoa taste unfolds into a diversity of distinctive types whose full sensory potential is yet to be further defined and discovered, in close collaboration with all involved local and international stakeholders.

The project invests in the cocoa sector in Caquetá with the goal of obtaining high quality and stable production. Innovative approaches and a dynamic and multidisciplinary team, focusing on the farmers and processes behind this unique product, are key to achieve these goals.
THE PROJECT

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM MADE UP OF AGRONOMISTS, AGROECOLOGISTS, CHOCOLATIERS, ENGINEERS, ARCHITECTS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE EXPERTISE TO FARMERS DURING ALL STEPS OF THE PRODUCTION PROCESS:

- Rescue of authentic cocoa varieties, with a focus on quality and distinct aroma characteristics;
- Local farmers being trained by national and international experts in production and post-harvest techniques; agroecological practices and agroforestry systems; increasing knowledge and awareness to the concept of quality (sensory tastings);
- Investment in post-harvest infrastructures, built with the input of specialists from different areas.

STATUS BEGINNING OF 2020:

- 150 farmers producing quality cocoa.
- 25 farmers with organic certification.
- 25 more in the process of obtaining it.
- 10 farmers with the capacity to produce special batches.

Making cocoa production a profitable activity for farmers is a crucial step in assuring a transition from illegal coca leaf production and providing revenues from a stable economic activity to victims of the armed conflict as well as ex-combatants in the process of reintegration. This is essential for the consolidation of Peace in Caquetá, one of the areas that was most deeply affected by the 50-year conflict in Colombia. The idea of “cocoa for peace” is an important element for the implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreements in Colombia.

Providing farmers with the tools to produce and commercialise high quality cocoa is essential to the regeneration of the economic and social fabric of this afflicted region. The project considers the social and organisational factors that are key to this process, by empowering farmers and community leaders and fostering dialogue and cooperation between the different actors of this territory, seeking to build stable and thriving communities. Effective gender equality approaches are also a crucial component, with women assuming a central role in cocoa production and rural development.
AN INTEGRAL REGENERATIVE APPROACH

IN A TERRITORY WHERE THE AMAZONIAN FOREST HAS BEEN HIGHLY DAMAGED BY THE ARMED CONFLICT AND UNSUSTAINABLE FARMING PRACTICES, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT COCOA PRODUCTION, AS A RISING SECTOR, CONTRIBUTES TO THE PRESERVATION AND REGENERATION OF THIS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ECOSYSTEM.

The project promotes cocoa farming in the context of diverse agroforestry systems, where production is combined with the plantation of native shading trees and bushes and other agricultural produces, to be consumed or sold locally. The farmers are trained in the implementation of agroecological practices, becoming aware of the importance of producing cocoa in highly biodiverse agroforests. These complex systems contribute to the overall sustainability of the territory and the regeneration of the Amazonian forest.

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